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THE FATE OF THE ARMENIANS
IN TREBIZOND, 1915

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Trebizond *vilayet* or province was fairly integrated into international commercial networks, and the Armenians in the port towns of Trebizond and Samsun on the southern coast of the Black Sea greatly benefited from their cultural and commercial relations with Europe. Because of the geographical location of the vilayet, the Armenian communities in Trebizond were relatively more prosperous than those of their compatriots in the historically Armenian regions of Erzerum, Van, Bitlis-Mush, Diarbekir, Kharpert, and Sivas. By the second half of the nineteenth century, however, Armenians in the vilayet and across the Ottoman Empire experienced a heightened sense of physical and financial insecurity, as the economic and military decline of the empire, particularly during and after the general economic depression of the mid-1890s, undermined the political legitimacy of the sultanate and gave rise to movements of variegated hues of home-grown and imported ideologies.¹

Most detrimental to the Armenians in the empire was the emergence of the fanatical nationalist faction within the Young Turk party,

¹ For a general survey of the Armenian communities in Trebizond vilayet, see Hovakim Hovakimian, *Patmutiun Haykakan Pontosi* [History of Armenian Pontus] (Beirut: Mshak Press, 1967). On manufacturing and trade in the region, see Suraiya Faroqhi, Bruce McGowan, Donald Quataert, Şevket Pamuk, *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire*, vol. 2: 1600-1914 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 739, 800-02, 817-20, 830-31, 911-12; Donald Quataert, *Ottoman Manufacturing in the Age of the Industrial Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 63-64, 75, 87-88, 94-95, 98-99, 100-01, 174-75. See also "Mineral Resources in the Trebizond Region," *Levant Trade Review* 1:2 (Nov. 1911): 131-32; Charles Issawi, "The Tabriz-Trabzon Trade, 1830-1900: The Rise and Decline of a Route," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 1:1 (Jan. 1970): 18-27.

which sought cultural homogenization through Turkification to reverse the process of imperial decline. The economic advantages possessed by the Armenians in Trebizond could not alter the political and cultural reality that the Armenians belonged to the *Ermeni millet* or ethno-religious community and were considered second-class citizens. Although the *Tanzimat* (Reorganization) had granted equality before the law and civil, political, and administrative reforms, and although the Ottoman constitution of 1876 had introduced a parliamentary form of government, Sultan Abdul Hamid II (1876-1908/09) and the Young Turk leaders who overthrew him perceived Armenian demands for improvements in local administration and physical security as a threat to their authority and rule.² In fact, following the Russo-Turkish war of 1877-78, the sultan suspended the constitution in February 1878 and showed little interest in implementing the reforms stipulated by the Treaty of San Stefano (March 3, 1878) and the subsequent Treaty of Berlin (July 13, 1878), which concluded the war. Nor were the nationalists in the Young Turk movement willing to accommodate such a radical political liberalization as to permit fundamental systemic changes that could in turn facilitate the exercise of local authority by the Armenians.³

Massacres and a Revolution

The Armenian communities in the cities and villages across the vilayet of Trebizond had for centuries experienced sporadic bouts of political and economic oppression of various degrees as well as forced conversion to Islam, as in the area of Hamshen. The political repression and massacres in the late nineteenth century, however, proved qualitatively

² The Tanzimat reforms included the *Hatt-i Sherif of Gulhané* (Noble Rescript of the Rose Chamber), November 3, 1839, and the *Hatt-i Humayun* (Imperial Rescript), February 18, 1856. See Hagop Barsoumian, "The Eastern Question and the Tanzimat Era," in Richard G. Hovannisian, ed., *The Armenian People from Ancient to Modern Times*, vol. 2: *Foreign Dominion to Statehood: The Fifteenth Century to the Twentieth Century* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), pp. 175-201; Şerif Mardin, *The Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1962).

³ M. Şükrü Hanioglu, *The Young Turks in Opposition* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995); Feroz Ahmad, *The Young Turks: The Committee of Union and Progress in Turkish Politics, 1908-1914* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969); Richard G. Hovannisian, *Armenia on the Road to Independence, 1918* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1967).

different in their magnitude of brutality exercised in the region. The massacres committed under Sultan Abdul Hamid against the Armenians between 1894 and 1896 resulted in the death of more than 100,000 and by some estimates as high as 300,000 Armenians, mostly in the six vilayets. The massacres in the vilayet of Trebizond occurred in October 1895 and claimed about 1,000 lives. Churches in thirteen villages were plundered and destroyed. The massacres and looting led to mass emigration and weakened Armenian community life.⁴ Thus, the general economic depression experienced in the mid-1890s was further exacerbated by the massacres, placing additional burdens on local economies.⁵

Armenians hoped that the Young Turk revolution of 1908 and the new government would finally provide the long-awaited opportunity to improve conditions under a new regime by introducing the much promised but never implemented reforms under the sultan. The restoration of the 1876 constitution in 1908 could have instituted a representative government premised on such democratic, egalitarian principles as free elections, equality among Muslim and non-Muslim citizens, and freedom of religion and education. Yet, as the nationalist leadership within the Young Turk Ittihad ve Terakki (Committee of Union and Progress; CUP) consolidated power, it placed a greater emphasis on Turkism at home and pan-Turkism abroad.

While during the period from 1902 to 1908 Armenian political organizations had intensified their activities in the province so as to secure greater protection for the Armenian population, hopes for reforms and improvements in Turko-Armenian relations after the restoration of the constitution dissipated rapidly.⁶ The Adana massacres in April 1909 heightened the concerns of Armenians about their protection. In fact, beginning in October of that year, the Armenians of Trebizond were

⁴ Felix Charmetant, *Martyrologe arménien: Tableau officiel des massacres d'Arménie* (Paris: Bureau des Oeuvres d'Orient, [1896]), pp. 11-13, 46; Johannes Lepsius, *Armenia and Europe: An Indictment*, trans. and ed. J. Rendel Harris (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1897), pp. 253, 280-85, 326; Armen Karo (Armen Garo), "Aprvats orer" [Days Lived], *Hairenik Amsagir* 1:9 (July 1923): 94; Richard G. Hovannisian, "The Armenian Question in the Ottoman Empire," in Hovannisian, *Armenian People*, vol. 2, pp. 222-26; Christopher J. Walker, *Armenia: The Survival of a Nation* (London: Croom Helm, 1980), pp. 156-64.

⁵ Faroghi et al., *Economic and Social History*, p. 871; Walker, *Armenia*, pp. 157-58.

⁶ The Armenian community elected Harutian Shahrikian (Shahrigian) as its provincial deputy to the Ottoman Parliament in Constantinople.

targeted for more repressive measures.⁷ The local Turkish newspaper *Trabzonda meshveret* reported that an anonymous placard posted in the streets of Trebizond read:

To give freedom to the Armenians and Greeks means the destruction of the state. The Ottoman state is already in decline. Therefore, the true friends of Islam will seriously think and take appropriate means to wipe out the Armenians and save the state from its fall.⁸

While the local Muslims were being urged to eliminate the Armenians, many Armenian intellectual and political leaders, encouraged by the reestablishment of the constitution, returned from abroad and resumed their political activities. The coastal towns on the Black Sea served as transport hubs for the Armenian activists. Through these towns, they maintained their connections with Europe and transferred into the Armenian vilayets returning political figures, publications, and weapons. Despite the shortcomings of the Young Turk government, well into October 1913 the Armenian communities in the province of Trebizond witnessed a reinvigoration of their political, educational, and cultural activities. Armenian educational and cultural institutions organized various social and cultural events, such as at the celebration of the 1500th anniversary of the creation of the Armenian alphabet, and local Turkish officials and foreigners often attended these functions.⁹

The Trebizond vilayet was home to nearly 100,000 Armenians in the 1880s, but the region witnessed emigration in large numbers as the political and economic situation deteriorated and physical security for the Armenians diminished.¹⁰ Prior to World War I, there were an estimated 53,500 Armenians in the vilayet, nearly 13,000 of whom resided in the city of Trebizond and the nearby villages. In the *sanjaks* of Tre-

⁷ Misak Torlakian, *Orerus het* [With My Days] (Los Angeles: Horizon, 1953), p. 111.

⁸ Quoted in Kevork A. Suakjian, "Genocide in Trebizond: A Case Study of Armeno-Turkish Relations during the First World War," Ph.D. Diss., University of Nebraska, 1981, p. 57.

⁹ Torlakian, *Orerus het*, pp. 22, 116-19; Suakjian, "Genocide in Trebizond," p. 58; Tigran Devoyants, "Kiankis drvagnerits" [Episodes from My Life], part 3, *Hairenik Amsagir* 22:2 (March/April 1944): 87-96.

¹⁰ In the 1880s the *sanjak* (county) of Shabin-Karahisar was part of Trebizond vilayet. See Marcel Léart [Krikor Zohrab], *La Question Arménienne à la lumière des documents* (Paris: Librairie Maritime et Coloniale, 1913), p. 59.

bizond and Samsun, there were 35 and 39 churches, respectively, and 42 parishes in each.¹¹ The churches of Surb Stepanos (Saint Steven), Surb Hovhannes (Saint John), and Surb Astvatsatsin (Holy Mother of God) were located in Trebizond city. In the regions of Trebizond and Samsun, there were 74 schools with more than 144 teachers and 4,600 students. These communities were able to establish close relations with the outside world and attracted teachers from great distances. During the academic year 1913-14, some of the teachers in the Armenian schools were Russian Armenians or Persian Armenians, including Vahan Minakhorian at Samsun; Sargis Barseghian at Kerasund (Giresun); Artashes Hovhannisian and his wife, Anahit, at Trebizond; and Tigran Devoyants at Ordu. The schools maintained close ties with each other and together organized various cultural activities for the community.¹²

At the same time, however, the memory of previous massacres, revisited by the fear generated by the Adana massacres, convinced the leading Armenian organizations such as the Dashnaktsutun (Armenian Revolutionary Federation) and the Social Democrat Hinchakian Party of the transitory nature of current improved relations between the Turkish leadership and the Armenians. Therefore, after the Adana massacres they began to prepare for self-defense. Indeed, during the Balkan wars (1912-13), although Armenian soldiers were loyally serving in the Ottoman army on that front, the government commenced repressive measures directed against the Armenian communities, including searches for weapons and arrests. Some forty Armenians were arrested

¹¹ Maghakia Ormanian, *The Church of Armenia*, trans. G. Marcar Gregory (3d rev. ed., New York: St. Vartan Press, 1988), Appendix II, p. 239; Suakjian, "Genocide in Trebizond," Table 4, p. 48; Germany, Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amts (hereafter PA-AA), Embassy Constantinople, No. 35/J.No.Geh.(secr.) 316, Consul Bergfeld in Trebizond to Bethmann Hollweg, July 9, 1915, rev. ed. of Johannes Lepsius, *Deutschland und Armenien, 1914-1918: Sammlung Diplomatischer Aktenstücke* (Potsdam: Tempelverlag, 1919), doc. 109, pp. 99-101, complete text, English trans. Linda Struck, in "Documentation of the Armenian Genocide in World War I: The Armenian Genocide 1915/16 from the Files of the German Foreign Office," ed., Wolfgang and Sigrid Gust (www.armenocide.de), cited hereafter as Gust, "Documentation"; cf. Haikazn G. Ghazarian, *Tseghaspan Turke* [The Genocidal Turk] (Beirut: Hamazkayin Press, 1968), p. 82. U.S. Consul at Trebizond Oscar Heizer estimated that there were about 36,000 Armenians in the province, including 10,000 in Trebizond city and the vicinity. United States, National Archives, Record Group 59 (cited hereafter as US Archives, RG 59), 867.4016/114, Heizer to Secretary of State, July 12, 1915, encl., Heizer to Morgenthau, July 7, 1915.

¹² Léart, *La Question Arménienne*, p. 69; Devoyants, "Kiankis drvagnerits," p. 90.

in Trebizond city and other towns in the province.¹³ In January 1913, the extremists of the Ittihad ve Terakki seized power in a coup against the government of the more liberal Hurriyet ve Itilaf (Freedom and Association) and established a military dictatorship.¹⁴ During the next five years, the Ittihadist triumvirate of Minister of the Interior Mehmed Talaat, Minister of War Ismail Enver, and Minister of the Marine Ahmed Jemal ruled an empire mired in political turbulence, war, and genocide.

From Reforms to War and Genocide

Despite the various difficulties confronting the Armenians, one final effort at reforms gave hope for improvements. The compromise reform plan signed by the Ottoman Grand Vizier and Foreign Minister Said Halim and Russian Chargé d'Affaires Konstantin N. Gulkevich on February 8, 1914 (in the aftermath of the Balkan wars) provided for the consolidation of Trebizond, Sivas, and Erzerum into a single province, and the Van, Bitlis, Kharpert, and Diarbekir vilayets into another, with each province to be supervised by a European inspector-general. In mid-1914, Major Nicolai Hoff of Norway assumed his office as the inspector-general at Van, and Louis Westenek of the Netherlands was expected to arrive at Erzerum soon thereafter.¹⁵ The Young Turk leaders fiercely resented the plan and did everything in their power to sabotage its implementation,¹⁶ but the Armenians of Trebizond, like their compatriots throughout the empire, took heart from the reform plan and hoped for further improvements in their condition. "The Armenian Question had . . . reached a new stage," commented Armenian Patriarch of Constantinople Zaven Der Yeghiayan in his memoirs. "New horizons were now opening up before the Nation, which had the right to expect a bright future" despite the knowledge that the Turkish government would "use all possible manipulations . . . to cause the reforms to fail."¹⁷

¹³ Torlakian, *Ozerus het*, p. 112; Suakjian, "Genocide in Trebizond," p. 58.

¹⁴ Ahmad, *Young Turks*, pp. 116-20.

¹⁵ Hovannisian, "Armenian Question," pp. 237-38; Simon Vratsian, *Hayastani Hanrapetutian* [Republic of Armenia] (Paris: Navarre, 1928; repr., Erevan: Hayastan, 1993), pp. 5-6.

¹⁶ See, for example, Djemal Pasha, *Memories of a Turkish Statesman, 1913-1919* (New York: George H. Doran, 1922), p. 276.

¹⁷ Zaven Der Yeghiayan, *My Patriarchal Memoirs*, trans. Ared Misirliyan, anno-

Unlike the Armenian communities in neighboring provinces where internal friction had intensified, the Armenians in Trebizond for a brief period were enjoying relative calm, as indicated by reports presented by the regional delegates at the Dashnaktsutiun's Eighth General Congress held at Erzerum in the summer of 1914.¹⁸ The outbreak of the war in Europe radically changed the situation. The military mobilization (*seferberlik*) decreed by the Young Turk government led also to the mobilization of Muslim sentiments against the perceived Christian enemies in Europe—that is, the Entente Powers (Great Britain, France, and Russia)—and at home.¹⁹ In August 1914, some of the Armenian educational and cultural institutions came under attack by the local Muslims, most likely instigated by the government. These included search and seizure campaigns by the local authorities and the imprisonment of Armenian businessmen.²⁰ Armenian soldiers from Trebizond conscripted into military service were disarmed, sent to the region of Gumushkhane to work on road construction, and subsequently murdered.²¹

After the outbreak of the war, the Armenians in the coastal towns, whose location had enabled them to participate directly in international trade and finance, lost the advantages they had over their compatriots in most other provinces. The war stopped all commerce in the coastal towns, which instantly assumed strategic significance as arenas for military operations and transformed the advantages into disadvantages. The Russian naval activities in Turkish waters could only exacerbate the existing dangerous situation for the local Armenians since the mo-

tated by Vatche Ghazarian (Barrington, RI: Mayreni Publishing, 2002 [original Armenian, Cairo: Nor Astgh, 1947]), p. 27.

¹⁸ Vahan Minakhorian, *1915 tvakane* [The Year 1915] (Venice: Mekhitarist Press, 1949), p. 66.

¹⁹ Der Yeghiayan, *My Patriarchal Memoirs*, pp. 41-42; Ghazarian, *Tseghaspan turke*, pp. 23-24; W.E.D. Allen and Paul Muratoff, *Caucasian Battlefields: A History of the Wars on the Turco-Caucasian Border, 1828-1921* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953), p. 234; Vahakn N. Dadrian, *The History of the Armenian Genocide: Ethnic Conflict from the Balkans to Anatolia to the Caucasus* (Providence: Berghahn Books, 1995), pp. 220-21.

²⁰ Suakjian, "Genocide in Trebizond," pp. 109-11; Jean Naslian, *Les mémoires de Mgr. Jean Naslian, Évêque de Trébizonde, sur les événements politico-religieux en Proche-Orient de 1914 à 1918*, 2 vols. (Vienna: Mekhitarist Press, 1951), vol. 1, p. 170.

²¹ Jon S. Kirakosyan, *Arajin hamashkharhayin paterazme ev arevmtahayutyune 1914-1916 tt.* [The First World War and the Western Armenians, 1914-1916] (Erevan: Hayastan, 1967), p. 299.

bilization and especially after the declaration of *jihad* or holy war in November 1914.²² As the war on the Western front escalated, the Turks and Russians carried on their historic hostilities for land and sea, and in particular for control over the Caucasus. From early to mid-December, as the Russian army retreated from the eastern border districts of Erzerum after a brief advance, the Turkish army destroyed entire villages, leaving behind a population scattered throughout the region. Then, Enver's disastrous winter campaign at Sarikamish (December 1914-January 1915), which caused the loss of more than 75,000 Turkish soldiers, turned the tide decidedly toward policies of mass arrests and violence.²³ During February and March 1915, the Armenian soldiers in the Ottoman army were disarmed and placed in labor battalions (*amele taburi*) on road construction between Erzerum, Erzinjan, Trebizond, and Sivas.²⁴

The unfolding crisis in the Armenian communities was amplified by Russian naval activities along the coast of the Trebizond vilayet. On February 8, 1915, Russian destroyers attacked Trebizond, and Russian cruisers bombarded Kerasund on April 20.²⁵ Between these two dates, hostilities toward the Armenians intensified and paralyzed their community. In the city of Samsun between April 11 and 15, Suleyman Nejmi Bey, the *mutasarif* (county governor) of the Janik (Samsun) sanjak from 1914 to 1916, ordered the arrest of more than thirty prominent Armenians.²⁶ In Trebizond city and the neighboring towns, on April 19 and for several days thereafter, the government conducted extensive house-to-house searches for weapons and deserters. Unable to unearth a significant number of weapons and deserters, the gendarmes arrested those suspected of revolutionary activities and collaboration with the Russians. Subsequently, several Armenian houses were torched. In response to the escalating Turkish hostilities, the local Dashnaktsutun and Hnchakian parties began to prepare for self-defense.²⁷ The Arme-

²² Naslian, *Les mémoires*, vol. 1, pp. 11-12.

²³ Allen and Muratoff, *Caucasian Battlefields*, pp. 253, 261-62, 284; *Current History* 2 (Sept. 1915): 1042.

²⁴ Henry Barby, *Au pays de l'épouvante: L'Arménie martyre* (Beirut: Hamazkayin Press, 1972; first published, 1917), pp. 20, 45-46.

²⁵ *Current History* 2 (Aug. 1915): 870-72.

²⁶ *British Foreign Office Dossiers on Turkish War Criminals*, ed. and comp. Vartkes Yeghiayan (La Verne, CA: American Armenian International College, 1991), p. 400.

²⁷ Torlakian, *Orerus het*, pp. 189-91, 195-97; Vahan Mazmanian, "Husher heghe-pokhakan antsialen" [Memories from the Revolutionary Past], *Hairenik Amsagir* 15:1

nian prelate of Trebizond, Kevork Turian (Gevorg Durian), protested the imprisonment of the Armenian leaders, but to no avail. Instead, Turian was declared *mou'zir* (dangerous) by the *vali* (governor) of the province, Jemal Azmi.²⁸ By April 24, when the authorities in Constantinople arrested and sent into exile more than 200 Armenian intellectuals and community and business leaders, mass arrests, forced conversions to Islam, and tortures had already begun in Trebizond, Samsun, Kerasund, and smaller Pontic towns and villages.²⁹

On May 24, the Entente Powers jointly issued a public condemnation of the deportations and massacres committed by the Turkish government against the Armenians and declared that they would hold the Ottoman government and its agents "personally responsible" for the massacres.³⁰ The declaration rather than deter further bloodshed seems to have emboldened the Young Turks to intensify their campaign for the destruction of the Armenian communities. On May 29, the Young Turk government adopted the Temporary Law of Deportation, granting the military full authority to supervise the wholesale deportation of the Armenians across the vilayets.³¹ The law accorded legitimacy to a pol-

(Nov. 1936): 119-30; M. Gushakchian, "Trapizoni ev Samsoni teghahanutiunn u jardere" [The Deportation and Massacres of Trebizond and Samson], in *Hushamatian Mets Egherni, 1915-1965* [Memorial Volume of the Great Crime, 1915-1965], ed. and comp. Gersam Aharonian (Beirut: Atlas, 1965), p. 468.

²⁸ Suakjian, "Genocide in Trebizond," p. 110.

²⁹ Ervand Fntkian [Fundukian], "Hishoghutiunner 1915-i Trabizoni jardi ev teghahanutian sev orerits" [Memories from the Black Days of the 1915 Massacres and Deportations of Trebizond], *Hairenik Amsagir* 19:10 (Aug. 1941): 55-71. For a chronology of events in 1915, see Naslian, *Les mémoires*, vol. 1, pp. 183-88.

³⁰ US Archives, RG 59, 867.4016/67, Secretary of State Bryan to American Embassy, Constantinople, May 29, 1915, and Sharp to Secretary of State, May 28, 1915; France, Archives du Ministère des Affaires Etrangères (A.M.A.E.), Guerre 1914-1918, *Turquie*, "Communication de l'Ambassade de Russie au Département," May 11, 1915, "Communication de l'Ambassade de Grande-Bretagne au Département," May 19 and 21, 1915, "Note du Département à l'Agence Havas," May 24, 1915, and M. William Sharp, Ambassadeur des Etats-Unis à Paris, à M. Déclassé, Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, May 28, 1915, in *Les Grandes Puissances, l'empire Ottoman et les arméniens dans les archives françaises (1914-1918)*, ed. and comp. Arthur Beylerian (Paris: Panthéon-Sorbonne, 1983), pp. 23, 25-29, 31.

³¹ Great Britain, Parliament, *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, 1915-16: Documents Presented to Viscount Grey of Fallodon, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs*, Miscellaneous no. 31, 1916, comp. and ed. Arnold Toynbee. (London: H.M.S.O., 1916 [3d ed, Beirut: G. Donigian and Sons, 1988]), docs. 12, 22, 23, 33, 34, 35, 77, 126, cited hereafter as *Treatment of Armenians*. The postwar Ottoman Parliament repealed the Temporary Law of Deportation on November 4, 1918.

icy already implemented since November 1914.³² The government subsequently formed the Commission on Abandoned Property for the purpose of confiscating properties left behind by the deported Armenians.³³

Deportations and Massacres

In early June 1915, Eyub Zade, a provincial representative, reportedly asked Nail Bey, the principal CUP agent (responsible secretary) in Trebizond: "What will our response be to the European nations asking for an account one day or another?" Nail Bey responded: "If we win the war, there will be no accounting. If we lose, the end result is simple. The extermination will be added to our responsibility. In the process, however, we would have finished the Armenian question."³⁴ In the meantime, the government made further arrests in Trebizond and on June 25, 1915, issued a proclamation ordering the Armenians of the city to deliver, within five days, their properties to the government and prepare for their journey to the interior on July 1.³⁵ Aware of the conditions suffered by their compatriots in the neighboring provinces, the Armenians of Trebizond fearfully expected similar treatment at the hands of the gendarmes.³⁶ In fact, on orders of Vali Jemal Azmi to the Erzerum War Council, Prelate Kevork Turian, along with his personal guards, was strangled by the escorting gendarmes on the road to Erzerum on June 10/23.³⁷ The following evening, on June 11/24, 1915,

See Dadrian, *History*, pp. 221-22.

³² Christopher J. Walker, "World War I and the Armenian Genocide," in Hovannisian, *Armenian People*, vol. 2, pp. 252-53.

³³ Henry H. Riggs, *Days of Tragedy in Armenia: Personal Experiences in Harpoot, 1915-1917* (Ann Arbor: Gomidas Institute, 1997), p. 92.

³⁴ Ghazar Makunts, *Trabizoni Hayots teghahanutiune* [The Deportation of the Trebizond Armenians] (Tehran: Alik, 1963), pp. 61-62, as quoted in Suakjian, "Genocide in Trebizond," p. 114.

³⁵ On June 26, 1915, the local Turkish newspaper, *Trabizonda Meshveret*, published the official proclamation for the deportation of the Armenians of Trebizond. See US Archives, RG 59, 867.4016/85, Heizer to Morgenthau, June 28, 1915; Naslian, *Les mémoires*, vol. 1, pp. 170-71.

³⁶ US Archives, RG 59, 867.4016/93, Morgenthau to Secretary of State, July 13, 1915, encl. Heizer to Morgenthau, June 30, 1915.

³⁷ Germany, PA-AA, Embassy Constantinople, DuA doc. 149 (abbr.), J. No. 3841, Colonel Stange, Erzerum, to the German Military Mission, Constantinople, "Report on the Deportation of the Armenians," Aug. 23, 1915, rev. ed. Lepsius, *Deutschland*, doc. 149, pp. 138-42, complete text, English trans. Linda Struck, in

about twenty-five leading members of the Dashnaktsutun and Russian Armenians were arrested and taken to the government building in Trebizond on the pretext that they were to testify before the War Council at Samsun. They were then put in chains and taken to Platana, about 7 miles west of Trebizond city, and immediately thereafter taken to the open sea, escorted by a ship full of Turkish soldiers who shot them.³⁸

In a telegram dated June 27, 1915, German Consul Heinrich Bergfeld at Trebizond expressed concerns to the embassy in Constantinople regarding the humanitarian calamities awaiting the Armenians:

About 30000 persons are affected by the deportations just in the Vilayet of Trapezunt. A mass transport of this kind for hundreds of kilometres along routes that are lacking in accommodation and supplies, and where 300 kilometres must count as being completely infested with typhus fever, would claim enormous numbers of victims, particularly among the women and children.³⁹

On June 28, U.S. Consul at Trebizond Oscar Heizer sent a copy of the government proclamation of June 25 to U.S. Ambassador Henry Morgenthau, informing him that "within five days from [the date of the proclamation], the entire Armenian population of Trebizond and vicinity including men, women and children will be obliged to turn over to the government such property as they cannot take with them and start for the interior, probably for Eldjezireh [Jezire] or Mosul where they will remain until the end of the war. Upon their return after the war their goods will be returned to them." He continued:

It is impossible to convey an idea of the consternation and despair the publication of this proclamation has produced upon the people. I have seen strong, proud, wealthy men weep like children while they told me that they had given their boys and girls to Persian and Turkish

Gust, "Documentation"; Suakjian, "Genocide in Trebizond," pp. 114-15n20; Barby, *Au pays de l'épouvante*, p. 51.

³⁸ Germany, PA-AA, Embassy Constantinople, No. 35/J.No.Geh.(secr.) 316, Consul Bergfeld, Trebizond, to the Reichskanzler (Theobald von Bethmann Hollweg), July 9, 1915, doc. 109, pp. 99-101, English trans. Linda Struck; Yeghiayan, *British Foreign Office Dossiers*, p. 432; Suakjian, "Genocide in Trebizond," pp. 115-16; Naslian, *Les mémoires*, vol. 1, pp. 172-73.

³⁹ Germany, PA-AA, Embassy Constantinople, BoKon/169, Consul Bergfeld to German Embassy, Constantinople, Telegraphic Report, June 27, 1915, rev. ed. of Lepsius, *Deutschland*, doc. 100, pp. 91-92, English trans. Linda Struck, in Gust, "Documentation."

neighbors. . . . Even a strong man without the necessary outfit and food would be likely to perish on such a trip. . . . The people are helpless but are making preparations to start on the perilous journey.

The Armenians were not permitted to sell or to take any of their belongings with them, but the proclamation promised that they could reclaim their goods upon their return after the war.⁴⁰ Carl Schlimme, a German consular employee at Erzerum, witnessed during an assignment in Trebizond that "police officers in front of the police station took pitiful bundles away from the passing deportees."⁴¹

The Armenians of Trebizond were thus condemned to march on foot for hundreds of miles. Armenians and foreigners petitioned the authorities to stay the deportations. A group of Armenian community leaders, including the assistant primate Shegha Zulalian, Reverend Zakarian of the Protestant community, and businessman Gaydzag Arabian (Kaitsak Arapian) petitioned Jemal Azmi and Nail Bey to stop the deportations, but to no avail. Also petitioning were Consul Heizer, Greek primate Archbishop Chrysanthos, and German Consul Heinrich Bergfeld.⁴²

On June 30, 1915, Heizer dispatched additional information regarding the situation in Trebizond and the deplorable conditions of the Armenian refugees. He reported that in Erzerum, hundreds of Armenian women and children were in wretched conditions, "wandering about in the forests and the mountains, some of them naked, having been robbed of their honor and their clothing." The Armenians of Trebizond, preparing for their journey, were aware of these conditions and expected a similar treatment at the hands of Turkish gendarmes. Although an effort was made to change their destination from Mosul to Gumushkhane to keep them in the Trebizond vilayet, most were nonetheless being deported to Mosul, where the Ittihadist Ibrahim Fezi was assigned the task of organizing a branch of the *Teshkilat-i Mahsusa* (Special Organization) for the purpose of murdering the Armenians within his jurisdiction and those arriving from other deportation routes.

⁴⁰ US Archives, RG 59, 867.4016/85/105/114, Heizer to Morgenthau, June 28, 1915; Morgenthau to Secretary of State, July 26, 1915; Heizer to Secretary of State, July 12, 1915, encl., Heizer to Morgenthau, June 28, 1915; Ghazarian, *Tseghaspan Turke*, pp. 74-77.

⁴¹ Germany, PA-AA, Embassy Constantinople, DuA doc. 149 (abbr.), J. No. 3841, Colonel Stange, "Report."

⁴² Suakjian, "Genocide in Trebizond," pp. 119-20.

Governor Jemal Azmi informed Heizer that the authorities had decided to make an exception for Catholic Armenians, old men and women, widows, pregnant women, and government employees, but that all others had to leave.⁴³

On the morning of July 1, 1915, the first caravan consisting of about 600 Armenians accompanied by gendarmes with fixed bayonets marched out of Trebizond city. A second caravan followed two days later on July 3. Consul Heizer reported that within the first three days of the month nearly all the "clergymen, merchants, bankers, lawyers, mechanics, tailors and men from every walk of life" were deported. On July 5, another caravan, comprising nearly 2,000 Armenians, left Trebizond city.⁴⁴ A caravan totaling 700, which left Trebizond on July 7, reached as far as the Kemakh gorge south of Erzinjan where most were massacred. The last major group, composed of about 1,000, left the city on July 18.⁴⁵ Although at first, as claimed by Jemal Azmi, the government exempted some Armenians, soon they, too, were exiled. Armenians holding Russian, Persian, or Bulgarian citizenship were also sent away despite petitions on their behalf.⁴⁶

Consul Heizer recommended that "some measures be taken at Constantinople to secure a withdrawal of this order if possible or at least a modification so as to spare the old men, women, and children from such a journey which would mean certain destruction." Heizer also met with the governor to request some exceptions to the deportation orders. The vali refused to make any promises but noted that he had telegraphed Constantinople "asking that an exception be made for Armenians in official positions," perhaps including Heizer's two Armenian consular *kavases* (guards/attendants) and the clerk. Heizer advised other Americans in the empire to be cautious in communications with the embassy concerning the Armenians so as not to "appear to the local authorities here that the consulate was taking too active a part in an af-

⁴³ US Archives, RG 59, 867.4016/93/114, Morgenthau to Secretary of State, July 13, 1915, encl., Heizer to Morgenthau, June 30, 1915; Heizer to Secretary of State, July 12, 1915, encl., Heizer to Morgenthau, June 30, 1915.

⁴⁴ Hovakimian, *Patmutiun Haykakan Pontosi*, pp. 128-29; Torlakian, *Orerus het*, pp. 96-98; Suakjian, "Genocide in Trebizond," pp. 132-36.

⁴⁵ Hovakimian, *Patmutiun Haykakan Pontosi*, pp. 128-29; Torlakian, *Orerus het*, pp. 96-98; Suakjian, "Genocide in Trebizond," pp. 132-36.

⁴⁶ US Archives, RG 59, 867.4016/126, Morgenthau to Secretary of State, Aug. 18, 1915, encl., Heizer to Morgenthau, July 28, 1915.

fair between the Turkish government and its own subjects.”⁴⁷ After the deportations began, Consul Heizer reported:

On Thursday, July 1st, all the streets were guarded by gendarmes with fixed bayonets, and the work of driving the Armenians from their homes began. Groups of men, women and children with loads and bundles on their backs were collected in a short cross street near the Consulate and when a hundred or so had been gathered they were driven past the Consulate on the road toward Gumushkhané and Erzingan. . . .⁴⁸

Within weeks about 6,000 Armenians had been deported from the city and its environs; most of them were deported south toward Gumushkhane, about 90 miles (195 kilometers) from Trebizond.⁴⁹ As the Armenians were evacuated from their houses, the authorities posted public notices warning all against protecting Armenians under the penalty of death. The CUP officials rejected a plan by the Greek metropolitan, Archbishop Chrysanthos, to provide safe haven for the children in schools and orphanages. Instead, boys were handed over to Turkish farmers, while girls were “kept in houses for the pleasure of members of the gang which seems to rule affairs here.” The German consul at Trebizond did not expect that the Armenians would return home after the war.⁵⁰ Nearly 3,000 children had been placed in so-called “Turkish orphanages” under Turkish *mudirs* (directors) and guarded by the gendarmes. Heizer commented: “Very disquieting reports concerning the treatment of these people who have been sent

⁴⁷ US Archives, RG 59, 867.4016/93/114, Morgenthau to Secretary of State, July 13, 1915, encl., Heizer to Morgenthau, June 30, 1915; Heizer to Secretary of State, July 12, 1915, encl., Heizer to Morgenthau, June 30, 1915.

⁴⁸ US Archives, RG 59, 867.4016/126, Morgenthau to Secretary of State, Aug. 18, 1915, encl., Heizer to Morgenthau, July 28, 1915.

⁴⁹ US Archives, RG 59, 867.4016/114/126, Heizer to Secretary of State, July 12, 1915, encl., Heizer to Morgenthau, July 3, 1915; RG 59, 867.4016/114, Heizer to Secretary of State, July 12, 1915, encl., Heizer to Morgenthau, July 7, 1915; Morgenthau to Secretary of State, Aug. 18, 1915, encl., Heizer to Morgenthau, July 28, 1915; *Treatment of Armenians*, docs. 72, 73, 76; Sebuhi Akuni, *Milion me hayeru jardi patmutiune* [The Story of the Massacre of a Million Armenians] (Constantinople: Hayastan, 1921), p. 177.

⁵⁰ US Archives, RG 59, 867.4016/114/126, Heizer to Morgenthau, July 3, 1915; Heizer to Morgenthau, July 7, 1915; and Heizer to Morgenthau, July 10, 1915, encl., Heizer to Secretary of State, July 12, 1915; Morgenthau to Secretary of State, Aug. 18, 1915, encl., Heizer to Morgenthau, July 28, 1915.

away are current and if one half turn out to be true it will be shocking."⁵¹

The deportations in the cities of Kerasund, Ordu, and Samsun commenced on July 10. Mutasarif Nejmi Bey at first offered exemption from the deportations to Armenians who converted to Islam. It is an exaggeration, however, that in Kerasund 200 out of 400 Armenian families and in Ordu 160 out of 250 families converted to Islam to avoid deportation.⁵² Still, even most of those who did convert did not escape deportation. Many were moved westward to Bafra, only to be ordered south to Kavak and thence to Sivas. There, the vali, Ahmed Muammer Bey, whose anti-Armenian campaigns had gained him much notoriety but also the confidence of the Ittihadist regime, organized death squads to murder both the local Armenians and the refugees marching through his province.⁵³ The first caravan, consisting of 1,200 people, nearly half of the Armenian population of Kerasund, marched to Dari-Koy, where the elderly were separated from the group and murdered in the nearby hills. On the next day, the men, nearly 500 in all, were separated from the caravan and forced to the mountains of today's Eğribel in Giresun Dağları and killed. The caravan continued southward to Shabin-Karahisar and Tamzara. The Kurds of a village near Shabin-Karahisar abducted the young women. The rest were ordered to march on to the village of Adzbdet (Aydzbdet), where the remaining men were massacred. After days of torment, the caravan marched to Demir Maghara, an area that became the cemetery for the deportees from Kerasund. A small number of the survivors reached Agn in Kharpert vilayet.⁵⁴

In Samsun, where the arrest of leading Armenian figures began in April 1915, the authorities permitted, prior to the deportations, those accepting Islam to remain, thus saving approximately fifty Armenians. As the caravans began to march out of Samsun, the men were separated from their families and killed about a mile from the city. German Consul M. Kuckhoff at Samsun maintained that the Turkish govern-

⁵¹ US Archives, RG 59, 867.4016/93/103/114, Morgenthau to Secretary of State, July 13, 1915; Morgenthau to Secretary of State, July 20, 1915, encl., letter by Heizer to Morgenthau, July 7, 1915; Heizer to Secretary of State, July 12, 1915.

⁵² US Archives, RG 59, 876.4016/122, Morgenthau to Secretary of State, Aug. 10, 1915, encl., doc. 3, report of Dashnaksutiun Committee, Balkan Section.

⁵³ Yeghiayan, *British Foreign Office Dossiers*, p. 399.

⁵⁴ By the end of the deportations, no more than 2,000 Armenians of Trebizond had survived. Akuni, *Milion me hayeru jardi patmutiune*, pp. 183-84.

ment, claiming to react to revolutionary activities by Armenians, particularly in Van, engaged in the wholesale destruction of the Armenian nation. While some Armenians were in fact involved in such affairs, Kuckhoff wrote, most did not participate but became the innocent victims of a concerted policy of Islamization and destruction. He added:

In the area around Samsun, all Armenian villages have been converted to Islam, in Uniah likewise. Privileges were not granted to anyone except the renegades. All Armenians without exception: men, women, the old, children, even babies, the Orthodox, Protestants and Catholics—the latter never took part in any national revolutionary movement and were also spared by Hamid—had to leave. No Christian Armenian is allowed to stay here; not even those of foreign nationality; the latter are to be expelled from the country. The destination of those exiled from Samsun is said to be Urfa, according to a statement by the Mutessarif.

For sure no Christian Armenian will reach this destination. According to news from the interior, there are already reports of the disappearance of the deported population of whole towns.⁵⁵

At Trebizond, after the deportees left the city, the men were taken into the mountains and massacred. The women were forced to march in deplorable condition toward Erzinjan, but their exact whereabouts could not be confirmed. Most did not survive far beyond Gumushkhane, as they were murdered a little distance from the town. Some of the refugees trudged on to Enderes, Amasia, Tokat, Sivas, and Malatia, being robbed, raped, and murdered all along the way. After three months on the road, a small number of survivors reached Suruj.⁵⁶ Drowning and disposal in the sea paralleled the deportations and massacres on land.⁵⁷ An unknown number of Armenians were promised to

⁵⁵ Germany, PA-AA, Embassy Constantinople, Ambassador (Hans von) Wangenheim, Constantinople to the Reichskanzler, No. 449, July 16, 1915, encl., Kuckhoff, Samsun, No. 349, July 4, 1915, rev. ed. of Lepsius, *Deutschland*, doc. 116, pp. 104-06, English trans. Linda Struck, in Gust, "Documentation."

⁵⁶ Akuni, *Milion me hayeru jardi patmutiune*, pp. 180-82; Germany, PA-AA/R14088, Scheubner-Richter, Erzerum, to Hohenlohe-Langenburg, Constantinople, J. No. 580/Secret Report No. 23, Aug. 5, 1915, encl., German consular employee at Erzerum, Karl Schlimme, "Report on My Journey to Trebizond," in rev. ed. of Lepsius, *Deutschland*, docs. 129 and 130, pp. 116-22, English trans. Vera Draack, in Gust, "Documentation"; Naslian, *Les mémoires*, vol. 1, pp. 172-73.

⁵⁷ Yeghiayan, *British Foreign Office Dossiers*, pp. 435-36; A.H. Papazian, *Hayeri tseghaspanutiune est Eritturkeri datavarutian pastatghteri* [The Armenian Genocide

be taken from Trebizond city to Samsun by sea but were thrown into the sea as their boats were steered away from the shore. Heizer wrote that this form of disposal became a common practice, as boats loaded with people left Trebizond but soon returned empty.⁵⁸

In an urgent appeal to Bishop Ghevond Turian, Prelate of Bulgaria, for outside assistance, Patriarch Zaven wrote in mid-July 1915:

Not a single house has been exempted from these searches: no Prelacies, no churches, and no schools. Hundreds of women, girls, and even children are languishing in jails today; churches and monasteries have been robbed, destroyed, and desecrated. Even Prelates have not been spared: Prelate of Brusa, Barkev Vartabed Tanielian; Prelate of Trebizond, Kevork Vartabed Turian; Prelate of Gesaria, Khosrov Vartabed Behrigian; Vaghinag Vartabed Torigian of S[habin] K[ara] Hisar; Kevork Vartabed Nalbandian of Charsanjak etc. have been jailed and taken to the court-martial. . . . The entire Armenian community in Turkey is now under detention, and mail and telegraphic communication have entirely ceased.⁵⁹

On July 28, 1915, Consul Heizer sent a lengthy report to Ambassador Morgenthau, complaining that the proclamation for deportations contained no provisions for the protection of Armenian lives:

If a person was an Armenian that was sufficient reason for being treated as a criminal and deported. . . . There is no attempt at classification [of goods] and the idea of keeping the property in "bales under the protection of the government to be returned to the owners on their return" is simply ridiculous.⁶⁰

According to the Documents of the Trials of the Young Turks] (Erevan: Armenian Academy of Sciences, 1988), pp. 44, 168.

⁵⁸ US Archives, RG 59, 867.4016/93/103/114/126, Morgenthau to Secretary of State, July 13, 1915; Morgenthau to Secretary of State, July 20, 1915, encl., Heizer to Morgenthau, July 7, 1915; Heizer to Secretary of State, July 12, 1915, encls., Heizer to Morgenthau, July 3, 7, 10, 1915; Morgenthau to Secretary of State, Aug. 18, 1915, encl., Heizer to Morgenthau, July 28, 1915. See also Germany, PA-AA, Embassy Constantinople, DuA doc. 149 (abbr.), J. No. 3841, Colonel Stange, "Report," Aug. 23, 1915; Akuni, *Milion me hayeru jardi patmutiune*, pp. 177-78; Barby, *Au pays de l'épouvante*, p. 46.

⁵⁹ See the text of the letter, Zaven Der Yeghiayan to Bishop Ghevond Turian, Prelate of Bulgaria, June 30/July 13, 1915, in Der Yeghiayan, *My Patriarchal Memoirs*, pp. 85-87.

⁶⁰ US Archives, RG 59 867/4016/126, Morgenthau to Secretary of State, Aug. 18,

Italian Consul Gorrini observed that for some Armenians, especially women, the traumatic experience was too horrendous to bear, and they physically dropped in the streets in total emotional paralysis. An unknown number of women jumped off nearby bridges or committed suicide in other ways; some went insane; and others rushed to the Greek and American institutions to secure protection for their newly-born children.⁶¹

Approximately 300 children attending the American school were left behind under the care of the American missionaries Dr. and Mrs. Lyndon S. Crawford. The authorities soon notified Crawford that he was required to place the children and their money and articles left with them under government supervision.⁶² In fact, while the Armenian population was being removed from their homes and neighborhoods, the authorities confiscated their houses, schools, shops, bank accounts. One local official, Mehmed Ali Bey, who held the post of assistant director of customs at Trebizond, robbed hundreds of Armenian girls and women of their jewels and other possessions, kept some of the girls at a branch of the Red Crescent Hospital for his personal pleasure, and distributed others among the Ittihadist leaders in Trebizond. Other women and children kept in temporary orphanages under Mehmed Ali's control were after two or three months forced to the outskirts of Trebizond and massacred near the river Deyermen-Dere. Mehmed Ali's close associates who were engaged in the planning and execution of the deportations and massacres in the region included, in addition to the governor Jemal Azmi, Ali Sahib (Saib), the principal medical officer of Trebizond vilayet; Avni Bey, the medical officer in charge of the hospital; Nail Bey, CUP responsible secretary in Trebizond; Nuri Bey, police chief; Mustafa Effendi, chief of intelligence operations in Trebizond; and Talaat Bey, deputy chief of gendarmes.⁶³ The German and Austro-Hungarian consuls at Trebizond were said to have petitioned the central government and local authorities for some modification in

1915, encl., Heizer to Morgenthau, July 28, 1915.

⁶¹ See the Italian consul's report in *Treatment of Armenians*, p. 292. See also Naslian, *Les mémoires*, vol. 1, p. 47.

⁶² US Archives, RG 59, 867.4016/114, Heizer to Secretary of State, July 12, 1915, encl., Heizer to Morgenthau, July 7, 1915; Yeghiayan, *British Foreign Office Dossiers*, p. 432.

⁶³ Kirakosyan, *Arajin hamashkharhayin paterazme*, p. 300; Yeghiayan, *British Foreign Office Dossiers*, pp. 431-36. See also Papazian, *Hayeri tseghaspanutiune*, p. 167.

the brutal treatment of women and children, but such appeals were to no avail.⁶⁴

A small group of Armenians sent from Samsun to Amasia in Sivas vilayet in late June 1915 journeyed within the jurisdiction of a compassionate official who threatened the escorting gendarmerie with severe punishment if they mistreated the refugees. When the latter reached Amasia, however, the men were separated from the group and bound in groups of five and forced away at night to an unknown location, most probably murdered on the road to Turchul (Turhal), Chiftlik (Tashli-chiftlik), and Tokat.⁶⁵

Writing from Erzerum, the German vice consul at Erzerum, Max Erwin von Scheubner-Richter, reported to Ambassador Prince Ernst Hohenlohe-Langenburg in Constantinople:

Large massacres of Armenians have been carried out on the Khänus plain and almost all of the men in Vilayet Trapezunt have supposedly been killed. In fact, while in Ersindjan I did not notice any men among those Armenians from Vilayet Trapezunt passing through. The method of expulsion was also much more brusque; for example, the Armenians in Trapezunt were only given a few hours and they were forbidden to sell their things. They were not given any means of transportation by the government, so that most of them had to walk. The Armenians in Siwas were treated in a similarly brusque manner.⁶⁶

Groups of refugees from Ordu, Trebizond, and other towns on the coast of the Black Sea were merged with other caravans of refugees, mostly women and children, coming from Erzerum and Erzinjan; when combined this large caravan consisted of 8,000 deportees by the time it reached the outskirts of Kharpert en route to more distant destinations.⁶⁷ "If it were simply a matter of being obliged to leave here to go

⁶⁴ US Archives, RG 59, 867.4016/93, Morgenthau to Secretary of State, July 13, 1915, encl., Heizer to Morgenthau, June 30, 1915.

⁶⁵ US Archives, RG 59, 867.4016/220, Morgenthau to Secretary of State, Oct. 26, 1915, encl., report by W. Peter, Aug. 26, 1915; Yeghiayan, *British Foreign Office Dossiers*, pp. 401-02.

⁶⁶ Germany, PA-AA/R14088, Scheubner-Richter, "Secret Report."

⁶⁷ "Statement of Dr. Tacy W. Atkinson," dated April 11, 1918, in James L. Barton, comp., *"Turkish Atrocities": Statements of American Missionaries on the Destruction of Christian Communities in Ottoman Turkey, 1915-1917* (Ann Arbor, MI: Gomidas Institute, 1998), pp. 42, 44; Leslie A. Davis, *The Slaughterhouse Province: An American Diplomat's Report on the Armenian Genocide, 1915-1917*, ed. and intro. Susan K. Blair (New Rochelle, NY: Aristide D. Caratzas Publisher, 1989), pp.

somewhere else," U.S. Consul Leslie A. Davis at Kharpert observed, "it would not be so bad, but everyone knows it is a case of going to one's death."⁶⁸ Some of the refugees from Trebizond vilayet remained near Kharpert until November, when another round of deportations from that city and its environs forced them out, although some were offered the option of conversion to Islam to secure survival.⁶⁹ During a meeting with German Ambassador Count Paul von Wolff-Metternich some months later, Ottoman Minister of Foreign Affairs Halil Bey "categorically denied" that the government ever attempted forcibly to convert the Armenians. Wolff-Metternich commented in a memorandum to Berlin that Halil Bey contradicted reports the German embassy had received from different regions.

From the detailed statements of Vice-Consul Kuckhoff in Samsun, which have been confirmed from other sources, it can be concluded that in particular in the districts around the Black Sea the attempts to Islamize the Armenians, partly through persuasion and partly through threats, has been carried out on a very large scale.

Elsewhere, moreover, where numerous Armenians on their own initiative have decided to turn to Islam in order to avoid exile and the confiscation of their property, the authorities have not given any privileges for this gesture and have deported them despite their conversion.

Apparently it is feared that the real purpose of the Armenian deportations, that is the total extermination of the Armenian race, could be thwarted by further mass conversions.⁷⁰

In late August, a small number of Armenians—including personnel

59-60; Henry H. Riggs, *Days of Tragedy in Armenia: Personal Experiences in Harpoot, 1915-1917* (Ann Arbor, MI: Gomidas Institute, 1997), p. 120.

⁶⁸ US Archives, RG 59, 876.4016/122, Morgenthau to Secretary of State, Aug. 10, 1915, encl., Davis to Morgenthau, July 11, 1915.

⁶⁹ Maria Jacobsen, *Oragrutium 1907-1919: Kharpert* [Diary 1907-1919: Kharpert], trans. from Danish by Bishop Nerses Bakhtikian and Mihran Simonian (Antelias: Catholicosate of Cilicia, 1979), p. 139; "Statement by Isabelle Harley," dated April 15, 1918, in Barton, *"Turkish Atrocities,"* p. 70. For a brief historical background on Armenian Muslims in Trebizond vilayet, especially Hamshen, see Hakovbos Tashian [Hagop Dashian], *Hai bnakchutiune Sev tsoven minchev Karin* [The Armenian Population from the Black Sea to Karin] (Vienna: Mekhitarist Press, 1921).

⁷⁰ Germany, PA-AA/R14089, Embassy Constantinople, Wolff-Metternich, Ambassador in Extraordinary Mission in Constantinople, to the Reichskanzler, Jan. 24, 1916, rev. ed. of Lepsius, *Deutschland*, doc. 230, pp. 229-30, English trans. Robert Berridge, in Gust, "Documentation."

of the Ottoman Bank and the French tobacco concession Régie de Tabac—who had been spared until then were deported from Trebizond at night and were believed to have been killed immediately on the outskirts of the city.⁷¹ By late September 1915 when the Turkish government published the text of the provisional law regarding the confiscation of Armenian goods across the vilayets,⁷² nearly all Armenians in Trebizond vilayet had been removed from their lands and forced to march in various directions—Kemakh, Amasia, Malatia, Kharpert, Urfa, and as far as Deir el-Zor in the Syrian desert. Thousands of exiles from the Trebizond vilayet had been killed on the mountain roads and passes.⁷³

Failed Responses to the Genocidal Policies

The Armenian responses to the deportation orders and the massacres ranged from silent compliance to suicide as a form of resistance. Most Armenians, acceding to the superior power of the Turkish military, followed orders and were marched to their death. In a handful of places, as in Van, Shabin-Karahisar, Urfa, Zeitun, and Musa Dagħ, the Armenians resorted to armed resistance. In Trebizond, the Dashnaktsutiun and Hnchakian parties had organized self-defense units in response to the Adana massacres in 1909, and when the government issued mobilization orders in the summer of 1914 some Armenian men in several towns and villages fled to the hills nearby. There they held out for several months. In September 1915, the Russian navy traversing by the shores reportedly attempted to reach them but without success. It was not until April 1916 that the Russian army entered Trebizond and rescued the remnants of the survivors.⁷⁴ Misak Torlakian, an active mem-

⁷¹ Germany, PA-AA/R14087, Embassy Constantinople, Hohenlohe-Langenburg, Ambassador in Extraordinary Mission in Constantinople, to the Reichskanzler, No. 549, Sept. 4, 1915, rev. ed. of Lepsius, *Deutschland*, doc. 160, pp. 147-48, English trans. Vera Draack, in Gust, "Documentation."

⁷² Germany, PA-AA/R14088, Arthur Gwinner, Chairman, Board of Directors, Anatolian Railway Company, to Foreign Office, Oct. 7, 1915, rev. ed. Lepsius, *Deutschland*, doc. 222, pp. 214-16, English trans. Vera Draack, in Gust, "Documentation."

⁷³ Ghazarian, *Tseghaspan Turke*, p. 79. According to Ghazarian, p. 82, there were 90,000 Armenians in the vilayet of Trebizond before the massacres and by August 16, about 60,000 Armenians from Trebizond had been massacred.

⁷⁴ Allen and Muratoff, *Caucasian Battlefields*, pp. 390, 396, 404; Kirakosyan, *Arajin hamashkharhayin paterazme*, pp. 301-02.

ber of the Dashnaktsutiun in the region, gives a detailed account of the resistance movement that spared the lives of some Armenians.⁷⁵ According to Vahan Minakhorian, a number of Armenian community leaders proposed razing the Armenian homes to the ground to deny their attackers the material gains of genocide, while others recommended first to seek refuge in the Greek quarter and in so doing to buy time to organize a resistance, despite being fully aware of the government's military superior capabilities.⁷⁶ Such schemes did not materialize.

Nevertheless, the Russian occupation of Trebizond in 1916 had allowed a small number of Armenian survivors to return to their communities. They hoped to revive Armenian life after the war, and their expectations ran high in 1920 when President Woodrow Wilson, in fulfilling his charge according to the Treaty of Sèvres, awarded Trebizond to the Republic of Armenia in his arbitration decision. By then, however, the Kemalist movement had gained momentum, and the Armenian communities of the Black Sea coast were to fall victim yet again to further Turkish atrocities.

⁷⁵ Torlakian, *Orerus het*. See also Hovakimian, *Patmutiun Haykakan Pontosi*, pp. 124-25.

⁷⁶ Minakhorian, *1915 tvakane*, p. 145.



Kevork Vardapet Turian, Primate
of Trebizond, Strangled, 1915



Hamazasp Vardapet
Yeghiseyan, Primate of
Samsun, Killed near Tokat,
1915



Hagopos Der Kalustian,
Protestant Minister of
Ordu, Perished in Deportation,
1915



Archbishop Chrysanthos, Greek
Metropolitan of Trebizond



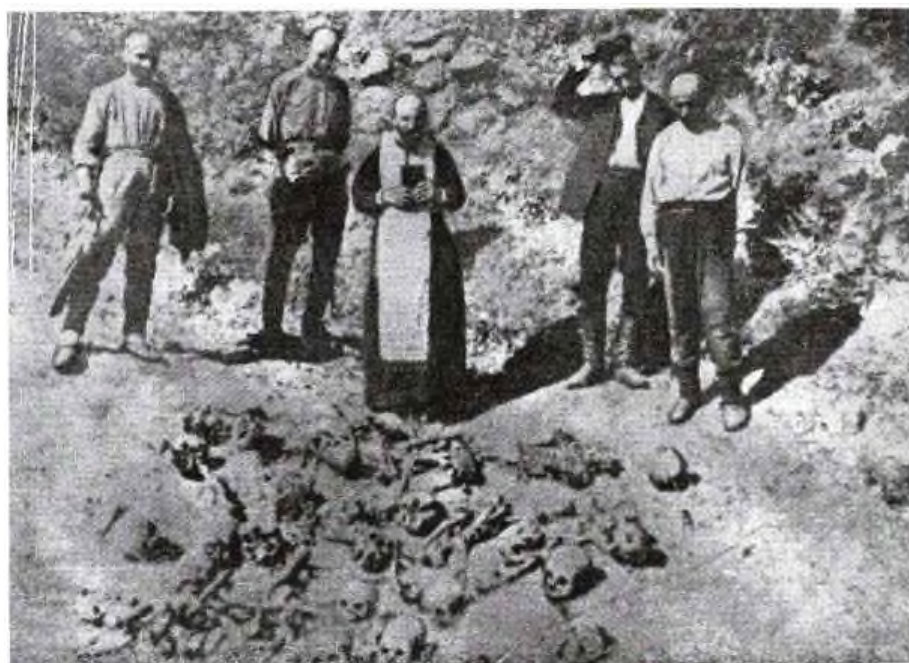
Deported Jamgochian and Balakian Women of Trebizond



Deported Payladzu Captanian
of Bafra



Armenian Partisans in the Pontic Mountains



Village of Totz, Requiem, 1916



Trebizond: Surb Stepanos Church, 1919